

Section 6 Disclosure of Information**6.1 Principles governing disclosure of information**

This section describes the principles governing the public disclosure of information by serving or former members of the Department and sets out the rules that apply those principles to specific cases. The activities governed by this section are:

- public lectures and speeches, interviews with or communications to the press or other media, film, radio and television appearances and statements to non-Governmental bodies, including MOD-sponsored conferences and seminars;
- books, monographs, articles, letters or other text, including supposed fiction;
- theses for degrees, diplomas or MOD-sponsored fellowships;
- participation in outside study conferences, seminars and discussions.

You must not make comment on, or make disclosure of

- classified or "in confidence" information,
- relations between civil servants and Ministers, and advice given to Ministers,
- politically controversial issues;
- material covered by copyright, unless prior permission has been obtained. Particular care must be taken where the origin of the material is obscure,
- information that would conflict with MOD interests or bring the Civil Service into disrepute,
- information that may jeopardise the commercial interests of the MOD or companies or organisations collaborating with the MOD;
- information that would undermine the security or other national interests of collaborating countries,
- anything that the MOD would regard as objectionable about individuals or organisations;

You must not publish or broadcast personal memoirs reflecting your experience as a Government official, or enter into commitments to do so, while in Crown employment.

6.2 Greater openness in Government requires:

- the fullest possible exposition to Parliament and the public of the reasons for Government policies and decisions once these have been announced; and

- improving public understanding about the way the processes of Government work and the factual and technical background to Government policies and decisions.

Ministers are responsible for the exposition of Government policies and decisions. Staff must avoid being drawn into public discussion on justification of Government policies.

6.3 Seeking permission

You must obtain authority, before taking part in any outside activity involving.

- the disclosure of information obtained in the course of official duties;
- the use of official experience;
- the public expression of views on official matters.

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The procedures for obtaining permission are set out in Annex M to Chapter 3.

You are responsible for seeking this authority in sufficient time to allow proper consideration. Failure to obtain permission before undertaking any such activity is a disciplinary offence.

Elected officials of a recognised trades union or staff association do not need to obtain MOD authority if they are publicising their association's or union's views on an official matter which, because it directly affects the conditions of service of members, is of legitimate interest to them. This exemption does not apply to the (probably rare) case where the official duties of the union or association representative as a public servant are directly concerned with the matter in question;

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You do not need permission to take part in activities organised by, or on behalf of, unions or staff associations, although conduct in public should still be consistent with the principles set out above.

6.4 International organisations

When serving in an international organisation, or with visiting forces, you must observe the rules and regulations of that body. You must consult Defence Information Division (D-INFOD) wherever material concerns the UK, or in any cases of doubt.

6.5 Former members of staff

After leaving the Department you must obtain official sanction from the MOD before publishing any information gained as a result of your official duties.

6.6 Press announcements

Official communications to the Press are made by the public relations staff, or other duly authorised personnel. You must not comment on issues of a politically controversial nature.

6.7 Broadcasts and media interviews

If you are approached directly about participation in a radio or TV programme, or about co-operating in the production of a programme you must report the matter in accordance with the detailed instructions in Annex M to Chapter 3. A member of the Defence Information Division or a duly authorised officer must be present at all press interviews.

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6.8 **Release of information at MOD conferences, seminars, etc**
Sponsors of MOD conferences and seminars, at which classified information is to be discussed, must obtain approval from AD CB Sy before issuing invitations.

6.9 **Political conferences**
You must obtain the permission from a senior line manager before attending conferences of a political nature in an official capacity

6.10 **Outside seminars and study conferences**
If you receive an invitation from a non-governmental body to participate in a study, conference, seminar or discussion you must seek prior permission from

- D News CPO – (Chief Press Officer) if serving in Ministry of Defence Headquarters,
- D Def Sy (Scientific and Technical), if DPA or DSTL personnel (for clearance of material);
- the TLB holder or his or her delegated representative, if working outside MOD HQ.

In any case of doubt you must consult D Def Pol. You must submit texts in advance in accordance with the procedures set out in the Annex M to Chapter 3.

6.11 **Outside organisations**
You do not need prior approval to take part in the proceedings of the following institutes.

- International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).
- Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA).
- Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (RUSI).

Your participation is, however, subject to the following conditions:

- if nominated by the MOD to participate in a study, conference or seminar on defence problems you are encouraged to make as useful a contribution as possible but, if you are in doubt, you should consult D Def Pol;
- when participating in a discussion, you must be aware that your remarks may be reported and publicised: you should avoid conflict with MOD or Government policy;

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- you must not reveal classified or commercially sensitive material.

6.12 **Questionnaires**
You must not:

- complete outside questionnaires if it involves disclosing detailed and significant information about official duties. If in doubt you must consult the security officer or the appropriate publication clearance authority;

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- take part in your official capacity in surveys or research projects, even unattributably, if they deal with attitudes or opinions on political matters or matters of policy.

6.13 Disclosure to others

Instructions are contained in the relevant security manuals about disclosure of information to.

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- MPs;
- foreign governments or foreigners;
- committee members, consultants and defence lecturers;
- contractors

6.14 Defence Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee (DPBAC)

Defence Advisory Notices are addressed to national and provincial newspaper editors, to radio and television organisations, and to some publishers or periodicals and books on defence and related subjects (DA Notices are issued and amended on the authority of the DPBAC). The Secretary of the DPBAC is available at all times to advise on questions that arise on the application of a DA Notice to some particular set of circumstances. Any advice requested by the press as a whole on the publication of items of information which appear to come within the scope of a DA Notice should be referred to the Secretary DPBAC.